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C O N F I D E N T I A L PARIS 009160

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [EU](#) [UP](#) [FR](#) [PL](#)

SUBJECT: UKRAINE: FRENCH ON YUSHCHENKO VICTORY

REF: A. KIEV 5146

[1](#)B. PARIS 9042

Classified By: Political Minister Counselor Josiah Rosenblatt for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (U) MFA desk officer for Ukraine Benoit Fremont described French satisfaction that the re-run of the second round of the Ukrainian presidential election had been conducted freely and fairly. Fremont agreed that while there had been some problems with the balloting, the level of fraud had not begun to approach that seen in November. Fremont did note the French Embassy's expectation that the Yanukovych camp may seize on the change in rules governing the use of the mobile ballot boxes, which saw several problems in implementation.

[1](#)2. (SBU) Fremont noted particularly the importance of Russia's willingness to accept the election results and Yushchenko's savvy decision to make his first foreign visit to Moscow. He also praised Yushchenko's intention to build a type of national unity government that would include Yanukovych supporters, thereby increasing the stakes those opposing Yushchenko will have in the new government.

[1](#)3. (SBU) Fremont denied that calls for eventual Ukrainian EU membership would grow so loud as to create problems within the EU. Pointing out that the Union had just formalized its neighborhood policy at the Dec. 17 Council meeting, Fremont said, "I don't think the question of Ukraine will divide the 25."

[1](#)4. (SBU) Fremont re-emphasized the appreciation the French had for the European negotiators -- in particular, High Rep for CFSP Solana, Lithuanian President Adamkus, and Polish President Kwasniewski. He noted that Kwasniewski and Chirac had spoken by phone during the negotiations process, as had officials at lower levels within the MFA, and said that these efforts had helped to buttress the improving French-Polish relationship since Kwasniewski's early October visit.

[1](#)5. (SBU) Meanwhile, Le Monde editorialized on Dec. 27 that, after the Baltics and Georgia, Ukraine had showed that "autocracy was not the inevitable destiny awaiting peoples in the former Russian (sic) empire." It further said that it is not only Putin who needs to recognize that, but Europe as well, noting that Europe must "aid Ukraine to do everything possible to develop a stable democracy and a modern economy."

[1](#)6. (C) Comment: It is unclear whether Fremont's assessment that the EU can easily handle Ukraine's European aspirations is wishful thinking or reflects the MFA's confident belief. Although the French -- along with the rest of the former EU-15 -- joined the new member states in encouraging the Ukrainians to stand up for democracy, the Quai's line will be that encouraging democratization and the establishment of a progressive regime in Ukraine does not automatically lead to consideration of Ukraine for candidate status in the near or mid-term -- far short of the wishes of Poland and other recent Central European entrants. End Comment.  
Wolff